

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PPD PROTESTS COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

REF: LISBON 6360 (DTG 161546Z SEP 76)

SUMMARY: THE PPD PROTESTED THE SOCIALIST ASSIGNMENT
OF ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS.
THE HOSTILITY GENERATED BY WHAT THE PPD SEES AS UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS COULD IMPERIL GROWING PS-PPD
COOPERATION AT A TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS THE FULL
SUPPORT OF THE MODERATE PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. PPD OBJECTS: FOLLOWING THE SEPT 16 MEETING OF ITS
PERMANENT ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC COMMITTEE, THE POPULAR
DEMOCRATS BY THE SOCIALISTS IN THE ASSIGNMENT
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OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS (REFTEL).

THE PPD DECIDED "DUE TO THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION" NOT TO NOMINATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS UNTIL THE ENTIRE PPD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP COULD MEET. PPD ASSEMBLY FLOOR LEADER BARBOSA DE MELO IN A SEPT 16 INTERVIEW SAID:
-- THE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT ALLOWED SOCIALIST DEPUTY ANTONIO REIS TO SERVE AS AN INTERMEDIARY IN NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS. WHEN THE PPD PARLIAMENTARY GROUP MET WITH THE PS GROUP, THE PS HAD ALREADY COMMITTED TO THE PCP AND THE CDS ALL COMMITTEES EXCEPT THE THREE ASSIGNED THE PPD.
-- PPD DEPUTIES WILL DECIDE SEPT 20 WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE CHAIRMANSHIPS ASSIGNED AND WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OFFICIALS.

2. PPD DEALT OUT: PPD LEADER RUI MACHETE TOLD EMBOFF SEPT 16 THAT THE PPD HAD SOUGHT THE CHAIRMANSHIPS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEES. THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS RECEIVED NONE OF THESE. MACHETE AGREED THAT THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS WERE AT THIS STAGE LARGELY HONORIFIC, BUT WARNED THAT THE PPD COULD NOT CONTINUE COOPERATING WITH THE PS IF IT WERE IGNORED. HE NOTED THAT THE PPD RECEIVED THE THREE LEAST DESIRABLE COMMITTEES.

3. COMMENT: THE PCP HAD SOUGHT THE CHAIRS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR COMMITTEES. THE CDS SOUGHT THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE OR EDUCATION COMMITTEES. EACH ACHIEVED PART OF THEIR OBJECTIVE. THE PPD APPEARS INDEED TO HAVE RECEIVED THE THREE LEAST DESIRABLE COMMITTEE CHAIRS. THE HOSTILITY GENERATED BY THE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS COULD ENDANGER GROWING PS-PPD COOPERATION AT A TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF ALL MODERATE PARTIES. THERE IS THE RISK THAT SOME PS LEADERS, SUCH AS ANTONIO REIS, ARE BEGINNING TO TAKE THE PPD FOR GRANTED. THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN THE PS DECISION, HOWEVER, WAS HOW TO OBTAIN THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT COMMITTEES FOR ITSELF. THE PPD CAN BE EXPECTED TO ADOPT A TOUGHER AND MORE SKEPTICAL ATTITUDE IN FUTURE DEALINGS WITH THE PS.
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